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234 Housekeepers' Chat

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "A Chinese Dinner, American-Made." Menu and recipes from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Pork in Preferred Ways."

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"Uncle Ebenezer," I said last night, "What shall we have for dinner tomorrow? Aunt Elizabeth will expect something unusual. Any suggestions?"

Uncle Ebenezer put down his paper. "Why not a Chinese dinner? That would be different."

"Eat it with chop sticks? That would be different, too," I replied.

"Omit the chop sticks," said Uncle Ebenezer. "Serve chop suey, fried noodles, and rice. That will lend quite an Oriental atmosphere to the meal. Use your Chinese candlesticks--those I brought you from Chinatown."

"Chinatown? What a fascinating trip I had, many years ago, in San Francisco's Chinatown. The curious little shops--so many things I wanted to buy, and couldn't. Do you suppose I can go back some time?"

"I hope so," said Uncle Ebenezer. He became reminiscent. "If you have ever been in Chinatown, there must be certain things that you remember, and certain hearsays you ought to forget. Forget the chinatown of the rubberneck busses; the hop joints, the tong wars, all the sort of thing that is made up for your special benefit. Remember the shops--if you like metal dragons, rice cakes, little gaily decorated packages of tea, mandarin robes, sandals and kimonos and ivory chopsticks. I have seen those things.

"But I like to walk through the streets, and watch the people. There are still a few shuffling-footed, pigtailed, pajama-ed figures left. On the shops are quaint signs that somehow look like figures from rough old lace. Black. Scarlet. Silver. Gold.

"And when you visit Chinatown, if you are lucky, you will pass a house where music is playing. Shrill music, which, to American ears, is without rhyme or reason. Ask the policeman on the corner, or some resident, and he'll probably tell you that there is a Chinese dance hall in that house. You may get in--the chances are that you will stay out. The Chinese are a modest people, who dislike to play with strangers.

"Of course, you won't forget to have a real Chinese meal somewhere in the quarter. If you are courageous, eat it as the Chinese do. They tell me that chop-suey was invented by an Irishman.

"The most fascinating Chinatown I saw," continued Uncle Ebenezer, "is in Havana. Block after block of low stone houses, opening directly onto the street. There you'll hear Chinese and Spanish spoken. Hundreds of little shops where you buy mostly things to drink. The Chinese in Havana are hard workers, and, like many humble people, their pleasures are simple. I gathered that their main pleasure was drinking orange juice, and talking around stone-topped tables. But there is always the magnificent Cuban moon, set like a great silver dinner plate in the sky. And the brooding, hot streets. It feels as if something is going to happen--always. Usually something does happen.

"But you don't have to visit Chinatown in Havana to know the Chinese there. They are everywhere in the city. Their restaurants are legion--their laundries are almost a monopoly--they trot through all the streets with burdens on their heads. And if you miss these, there are always the Chinese street peddlers, selling slices of pineapple to the poor.

"But if you want a genuine taste of the real philosophy of any Chinatown, live there for a few months or years. Make friends with some ancient shopkeeper. Visit him often, and talk. Some day he may tell you his story--when he came to this country, and why. He may tell you about those tong wars that puzzle us Americans so. He may ask you, one fortunate day, to visit his house and have a meal with him. Perhaps he will even give you an idea of his Oriental philosophy some day--if you live long enough."

Uncle Ebenezer paused. There was a far-away look in his eyes--I knew that he was thinking of the magnificent Cuban moon, and the brooding, hot streets of Havana.

Well-a-day! Perhaps we'll all go traveling some time--when our ship comes in. But in the meantime--what was our menu for tomorrow? Pork Chop Suey; Fried Noodles; Flaky Boiled Rice; Lettuce with French Dressing; and Grapefruit.

There's a recipe for Pork Chop Suey in the almost-brand-new pork leaflet. I'm going to broadcast this recipe, and I'll warn you now, you'll save time if you abbreviate. Use a small c for cup a big T for tablespoon, and a small t for teaspoon. Eleven ingredients, for Pork Chop Suey:

1-1/2 to 2 cups shredded cooked lean pork	1 green pepper, shredded
2 cups shredded onion	4 tablespoons soy sauce
2 cups shredded celery	2 tablespoons fat
2 cups meat broth or thin gravy	1 tablespoon cold water
2 cups sliced raw Jerusalem artichokes	1 teaspoon cornstarch,
or radishes.	and salt to taste.

Eleven ingredients, for Pork Chop Suey: (Repeat).

Brown the meat lightly in half the fat and remove from the skillet. Cook the pepper and onion in the rest of the fat a few minutes. Add the celery, meat, salt, broth or gravy, cover, and simmer for five minutes. Mix the cornstarch and water until smooth, stir into the mixture, and cook for a few minutes longer. Add the artichokes or radishes, or substitute for them 1 cup of sliced Brazil nuts or toasted almonds. Add soy sauce in sufficient quantity to give the desired flavor and then salt to taste. Serve with hot flaky rice.

Now do you want my recipe for Fried Noodles? It's an easy one.

Cook narrow, dried noodles in a large quantity of boiling salted water, for 15 minutes. Then drain, and place on absorbent paper to dry for about 20 minutes. Have a heavy deep kettle, about half full of well-flavored fat, heated to 375° to 400° F., or until a cube of bread browns in 60 seconds. Cook a small quantity of the noodles at one time, for the water in the noodles causes the fat to sputter and bubble and care must be taken that it does not boil over. When the noodles are light brown, remove at once from the fat, and drain on absorbent paper.

If you want directions for cooking rice, so it will be nice and flaky, consult the Radio Cookbook.

Let's assemble our Chinese dinner, once again: Pork Chop Suey; Fried Noodles; Flaky Boiled Rice; Lettuce with French Dressing; and Grapefruit.

Tomorrow: "Curtains and Covers."

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